

EXHIBIT B

1
METHOD OF MAKING X-RAY
PHOTOGRAPHS OR EXPOSURES OR
OTHER TYPE OF RADIATION SENSING,
SUCH AS ELECTRONIC IMAGE STORAGE,
AND A PATIENT TABLE HAVING A
RECEPTOR UNIT FOR SUCH
PHOTOGRAPHY, EXPOSURE OR IMAGE
STORAGE

TECHNICAL FIELD

The present invention relates to a method of imaging a person or an object in at least two directions by X-ray photography, while using an X-ray cassette as a receptor or other forms of radiation-absorbing techniques with the aid of a radiation receptor, for instance for electronic image storage.

In imaging processes of this kind, there is used a radiation source which is supported for movement in X-, Y- and Z-directions and which is rotatable about a horizontal axis. The receptor unit may be mounted in or positioned beneath a patient table and is movable in the X-direction. Movement of the radiation source may be initiated automatically, as the receptor unit is moved.

By X-direction is meant here and in the following a direction of movement which is parallel with one long side of the patient table, while by Y-direction is meant a direction of movement perpendicular to the extension of said long side, i.e. a direction of movement parallel with the short sides of the table. By Z-direction is meant movement in a vertical direction. This enables the patient table to be brought to different positions in relation to a tower column or a ceiling-mounted tower which carries the beam source.

The present invention also relates to a patient table equipped with a receptor unit, and more specifically to a patient table of the kind defined in the preamble of claim 5.

BACKGROUND PRIOR ART

GB-B-1 323 769 (Picker Corp.) describes apparatus comprising a receptor part disposed in a patient support table, and an overlying ceiling-mounted beam source. The apparatus enables side-on photographs to be taken with a horizontal beam path, by swinging-up the patient's support table about a horizontal axis and pivoting the beam source. The apparatus also enables the image size and the shutter setting to be varied in relation to the beam-source/receptor distance ("SID", i.e. "source-image-distance"). However, movement of the beam source and swinging of the patient support table must be effected manually, which is experienced as troublesome by the radiologists concerned.

EP-A-0 430 934 (AO Medical Products) describes a method of the aforesaid kind in which activation of a secondary receptor pivotally associated with the receptor unit or mountable thereon and extending in a vertical plane results, optionally after a time delay, in automatic movement of the beam source to a basic setting for horizontal, centered beam path onto the secondary receptor.

A Philips brochure describes a patient support table which carries a receptor unit for a vertical beam path. This receptor unit can be swung outwards and upwards from one side of the table, to a position for receiving a horizontal beam path.

This latter arrangement, which is considered to represent the nearest prior art, has a number of drawbacks. When the receptor unit is to be swung out and up to receive a horizontal beam path, it is necessary for personnel who need to stand on the other side of the table in order to manoeuvre